

AN
ADDRESS

TO THE

*Merchants, Manufacturers, and
Landed Proprietors*

OF

IRELAND.

IN WHICH

THE INFLUENCE OF AN UNION

ON THEIR

RESPECTIVE PURSUITS IS EXAMINED.

AND IN WHICH

THE REAL RECIPROCAL INTERESTS OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND IRELAND ARE CANDIDLY
AND IMPARTIALLY DISCUSSED.

—o*o—
BY NICHOLAS PHILPOT LEADER, ESQ.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THOSE who cannot be convinced of any thing by argument, will sneer at my officious and impertinent zeal in obtruding myself on the attention of the public. But if by looking at my country boldly in the face, at all its interests and all its dangers, I cannot prevent one honest legislator wavering from the line of virtuous duty, the reflection of contributing, even in a small degree, to the preservation and the comforts of the industrious part of the community, will amply compensate for what I have the vanity to hope the reader will not find trite and common-placed observations.

ADVERTISING



TO THE
Merchants and Country Gentlemen.

GENTLEMEN,

TO agitate the public mind by inflammatory
invective, or carry into public or private life a
fretful and vindictive acrimony towards those
who happen to be in power, would be at all times,
but more particularly at the present, repug-
nant to my natural disposition, and my love for
the greatest of all earthly blessings, domestic
peace and national security.—However from the
unbending zeal and unceasing perseverance, with
which the servants of the crown have endeavoured
to restore a tried, convicted and condemned
delinquent to the confidence of their fellow sub-
jects, it is most evident that they can foresee nei-
ther inconvenience to themselves, nor danger to

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their country, from the closest investigation of the principles by which they may be supposed to be actuated, or the means which they have used to effect so desirable an object. The supporters of the Union have at least one merit, in which they certainly have a conspicuous advantage over all their opponents, in their unwearied exertions to recruit their levies—their eagerness to defend and to propagate their principles—and in their attempts to demonstrate their sincerity if not by the soundness of their cause, at least by shewing the world that in their endeavours to carry their favourite measure into execution, they were neither deficient in courage nor consistency.

All circumstances taken together, the infatuation of the executive governments of both countries towards Ireland is the most singular and extravagant—had there been a change in his Majesty's councils, and had the new men on whom he was pleased to repose his confidence, projected the renovation or the new construction of the common wealth—though there are many amongst you who might possibly have trembled at their boldness, there is not one at least who could have been surprized at their inconsistency. But alas! how strangely have these ministers perverted in themselves and in those who attend to them, all the amiable and honourable characteristics of the human heart—have they not for these last ten years been in a state of permanent insurrection against



against every man who professed a speculative opinion or hazarded a sentiment in favor of the slightest innovation!—and how have the events of the day appeared to demonstrate the propriety of the conduct which they have pursued—have they not broken the most endearing friendships to wage eternal war against speculative projects?—Have they not obtained accumulated honors, and the most lucrative employments in both countries, for their supposed abhorrence of all kinds of innovation?—And have they not secured the confidence both of sovereign and of subject, for their holy and pious zeal to demonstrate, that a single departure from the wisdom of our ancestors would lead to the annihilation of all regular government, and that out of the destruction of established institution—those Theban and Thracian orgies acted with so much success in another country were sure to arise—these were the advantages which they obtained—and these the principles which they uniformly professed. That these men should on a sudden become principal performers in the scene representing before us, must fill the enlightened and benevolent mind with the most afflicting sensations, and furnish a complete triumph to those who might otherwise be supposed to insult them without cause, or censure them without proof.—When you, the industrious and independent part of the community, who feel and have felt the actual arrangement of the state

to be of the greatest possible estimation, observe this conduct in the supposed supporters of the established order of your own country, and contemplate the frantic freaks and the odious disregard of the interests of the human species, on the part of those in another country who have aspired to be classed among the benefactors of mankind—you seem to me to have no other alternative than to uphold, if you can uphold, the Constitution of our fathers, if not, to seclude yourselves from a world of vice, wickedness and confusion, the victims of an useless lamentation and unavailing sorrow.

Indeed the question, Union or no Union, is an awful and interesting one to every Irishman, or there is none awful and interesting at this side of the grave. It is better, therefore, to be condemned for too tremulous zeal, than to be ruined by too confident security. The relative interests of nations widely differ from the squabbling politics of parties, and it would ill become us to be indolent and lazy in the care of them, or from a nobleness of mind and frankness of character, to wave all unworthy suspicions. If the safety of the state is at stake, we cannot exceed in foresight or precaution; and as our conduct on such occasions ought to be influenced by arguments alone, drawn from truth and reason, so these arguments ought to be examined in proportion to the importance of the subject. When we fairly and

ditary patrimony and the earnings of their individual industry by wisdom and by virtue, is far preferable than to grasp at any honors which the crown can confer, or the wealth which the treasury can bestow, and hold them with a troubled conscience and the tenure of the sword. The rumour of the day certainly is, that an Union is to be carried at all events and under all inconveniences, but as I cannot readily accede to every vulgar report, so I must be excused for conceiving it possible that any measure could be passed against the councils of the wise, the arguments of the moderate and the intreaties of the humane—it is therefore that I think it of the last importance to shew, that every fresh occurrence abroad and at home, since the question was last discussed, affords the strongest arguments against the project, and that there is not the smallest ground for changing the opinion which we gave at the commencement of the former year, that an Union was calculated to strike a fatal blow against the property and the persons of all the various inhabitants of this great and prosperous town, and of consequence to have a baneful and deadly influence on the whole community. For of all the propositions which have ever been attempted to be maintained that which is intended to demonstrate—that a measure which is calculated to injure a great and prosperous metropolis, and which whilst it is operating that injury, is insensibly contracting the means

means by which great cities may be raised—can be disadvantageous to the particular member, without being disadvantageous also to the community at large, seems to me the most monstrous that ever was imposed on the credulity of the most distempered imagination.

On principles of political economy, that Dublin, in common with the rest of Ireland, must be injured

That the interest of the City of Dublin should ever be abstracted from the general interest of Ireland, is to me as extraordinary as that any honest reflecting Irishman could ever be induced to applaud the wisdom of the measure. It has been strongly relied on in various publications, that the partial evil to Dublin by an Union, will be fully compensated by the general good. The first subject for argument now is, that a Union is not only calculated to depress this city; but that it is calculated to depress and prevent the exaltation of any other part of the nation to the extent it might otherwise be advanced—a great metropolis instead of being the effect may be considered to be the cause of the improvement and cultivation of the country. There are some countries more than others in which (from existing circumstances arising out of ancient institutions or inveterate habits,) it is peculiarly necessary to avoid any experiment which might impede the growth of their great cities—and of all the countries in Europe, Ireland is that country which ought to be most cautious. It is to be remembered that even under the existing connexion there is a calamitous propensity

penfity in our great proprietors to emigrate to
 England ; and until it can be fhewn that the una-
 voidable abfence of three or four hundred of the
 firft families and fortunes in Ireland muft neceffa-
 rily diminifh the evil, I have a right to affume
 that an Union is not only calculated to create but
 to encourage emigration. Great proprietors ne-
 ver are conftant residents in the country parts of
 any nation, and very rarely, great cultivators.
 There is no proportion in Ireland between the
 great proprietors and thofe of moderate fortunes.
 We have not the means of afcertaining the precise
 proportion ; but that an immense proportion of
 the landed property of the country is in the
 hands of great proprietors is univerfally allowed
 —if the landed property of Ireland was general-
 ly diffufed among fmall proprietors or men of
 middling condition, the prefent argument would
 loofe confiderably in its weight : for fmall pro-
 prietors who know every part of their territory
 view it with all the affection which property natu-
 rally infpires, they cannot be allured to abandon
 the cheering and invigorating induftry of the
 country for the floth and lazinefs of towns—
 they are of all improvers the moft intelligent,
 the moft induftrious and the moft fuccefsful, and
 the moft likely to veft the rents arifing out of
 their fully improved lands in fome branches of
 manufactures. But great proprietors from their
 education and their habits, are rarely addicted to

great industry. Their motive is to make their lives pleasant without caring to make them useful. They have no bounds to expence, because they have no bounds to their vanity, or the value they set upon their comforts or their luxuries: they cannot live out of large and populous cities, because these cities are the seat of polished society—the nature of men is intricate and the objects of society of the greatest possible complexity. If in the infirmity of that nature we often convert the most imaginary evils into insuperable calamities; are we to entertain no apprehensions from real evils themselves? That many great proprietors by residing in another nation shew that they cannot enjoy the pleasure of polished society in their own, is a sufficient misfortune—shall we then adopt a measure particularly calculated to encrease the number of absentees, as well as to render those disposed to remain disgusted and discontented with their country—is it seriously to be contended that the absolute unavoidable necessity of transporting three or four hundred persons of the greatest fortunes and not the least cultivated manners, will not narrow the sphere of polished society, or shall it be asserted that such a transportation is not likely to make their old intimates of equal fortunes conceive at least they have sustained a loss, and encourage persons who might not otherwise form an idea of the kind, to imagine that those who have abandoned Dublin have found

found in London a more pleasant and agreeable society? Here then we leave the individuals sent to transact the business of the nation and the money they draw for their support out of the question. Is there no danger to be apprehended from folly, from fashion, from ignorance, from example on minds restrained by no tie and prescribed by no regulation? Is it to be gravely contended, that the different modes of thinking prevalent amongst men, the infinite and obscure combination of their ideas which often originate in principles false in themselves, but dear to them who adopt them, are to have no influence in unnerving the arm of the speculatist—shall it be said that, new institutions are not likely to create new prejudices; or is it gravely to be maintained that when a provincial dependency is substituted for national government, that the ties and principles which bind us to our country, and which are so interwoven with long habits of thinking ourselves at least a separate and independent people, that the one cannot be destroyed without the complete destruction of the other, will not necessarily be torn up and eradicated from the human heart!

Is it then prudent to give the great proprietors of Ireland cause for feeling and perceiving that they have not the advantage of polished society to the extent they had before the Union? Nay, is

it wise, by every years experience, to shew them that the state of society in Ireland is growing worse and worse. To oppose the measure, in mercy to this class of our countrymen, would be to take a confined and narrow view of the question. Those who would take the trouble to number the great proprietors who constantly or occasionally reside in Dublin, who would count the number of hands which are employed in administering to their wants and supplying them with luxuries or comforts, so as to estimate the numbers who may be thrown out of employment by by these proprietors changing their residence to England, those who can estimate the reaction of these ills, occasioned by the depression of this town on the country, by which its inhabitants are supplied with the means of subsistence, can alone properly estimate the misery and mischief which must be occasioned by this measure. To take any individual of large fortune, and enumerate his dependents, and then calculate the various means by which various individuals derive their subsistence through him, is a familiar illustration of this argument; but the evils from the absence of a number of these individuals on the great manufacturing houses, are not easily or readily perceived. All the dependant branches fall with the supporting trunk. The drain of the capital of these proprietors will try the bone
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and search the marrow of every manufacturer, whose misfortunes will recoil on a large portion of the labouring class of the community ; for as the calamity descends through the subordinate class, the victims will become more numerous, though less distinguished, until the whole community sinks under the pressure of those inevitable misfortunes.

A rebellion madly commenced, and a war rashly undertaken, may have occasioned great temporary inconveniences : but a train of fortunate occurrences may restore complete peace, and the victory of a day may compensate the defeat of years. For instance, Sparta, which was so often harrassed by the arms of neighbouring powers, was always seen to rise more formidable from oppression, and the celebrated defeat of Cannæ, only inspired the Romans with greater courage. But the slightest error in civil polity, are capable of producing the most destructive and permanent evils. Slighter causes than the revolution in their governments have occasioned the downfall of cities and the ruin of states. How the morals of the people can be ameliorated, and their manners improved, by depriving them of an intercourse with the higher orders of the state ; how the domestic trade of a nation can be increased by sending its greatest and richest consumers to a distant country, and how a nation at large

large can be enriched by remitting its wealth to support the number she has made it necessary to emigrate—are yet to be proved? No, no, depend upon it that in political economy, the metropolis of a country, is to the country at large—what in the admirable economy of human life, the heart is to the rest of the human system. That as the latter by its alternate contraction and dilation and by being that part of the system from whence all the arteries arise, and in which all the veins terminate, is the chief instrument of the circulation of the blood and the principle of life—so the former by presenting a ready market the most improved produce of every kind in the nation, and by returning in exchange the most improved manufactures, gives life, energy and motion to the whole community.

It is not very difficult to foresee the objections which may be made by those who may be unwilling to acknowledge the truths which are here attempted to be enforced—they will first contend that the argument drawn from emigration is founded on assertion and therefore ought to fall to the ground—you are the jurors impannelled to find the verdict. Secondly, though for the purpose of argument they will admit the fact of increased emigration, yet they will contend that Dublin might be injured and the rest of the country might be served; and that if there are emigrants of one kind from Ireland, there will be others

sing it to take place, that must necessarily occasion a transportation of capital to any part of Ireland. As for the trade of the world (except the East Indies), we have the same liberty as any other nation whatever; and as for the trade to the British market, we have as much of it as is necessary for our purposes. Under all the circumstances of England and of Europe, it is clear to my understanding, that if an Union could occasion the transportation of capital to be vested in any business in any part of Ireland, that the measure never would be adopted. Sunk as England is, in debt, and with immense drains from her national capital, the revulsion of capital from one trade to be put in another, much more from country to country, could least be admitted in times of peril and emergency. The removal of capital from one business to another, is attended with great temporary loss. If the existence of England depends on the silent and steady operation of industry through all its regular and ordinary channels, is it likely that the present minister, who must reckon on laying on new taxes every year, would throw obstacles in his own way, or impede the progress of a machine, on the regular evolutions of which, the safety of the empire at this moment depends. An Union is not only recommended on account of the inestimable, but the immediate advantages which it must extend to Ireland. Now supposing it most true,

true, that the liberality of England, in permitting the transportation of her capital, arises from the certainty of being able to controul its application; and secondly, from her having the means at any time, by a vote of the legislature, to tax that capital when it becomes productive; yet what economist will contend, that it will not be many years after it is transported, and sunk in machinery, buildings, &c. before it can give the individuals who send it, much less the state which sanctions its being sent, an accruing profit or advantage—I ask therefore any man to put his hand on his heart, and answer yes or no; does he in his conscience believe that after the horrid scenes which have happened in Ireland—the notorious disaffection of many, the indignation of all at an Union; the unfetled state of human affairs over the world, and the certainty of this capital supposing it transferred, not producing for years, that Mr. Pitt would not be a vile and unprincipled enemy to England, ground down by a disastrous war, if he suffered an Union to be carried into execution, if the capital of England was necessarily to be transported to this country. We want no superior discernment to see through these clumsy frauds, we require not to contemplate the obstinacy with which the measure is persevered in, we need only require to observe the situation of England herself to have our minds perfectly enlightened on this part of the subject—and yet

yet it is "British capital," to use the words of a learned English prelate "which will convert our bogs into fields covered with smiling harvests, which will cover our barren mountains with cattle, which will work our mines and collieries, and unite the most distant parts of the country with canals, which will extend the old sources of wealth and strike out new ones and render the people of Ireland, now poor and discontented, rich, industrious and happy."

Hæu quam difficile est crimen non prodere vultu.

OVID.

Let us now consider this subject in another in another point of view—unless it is conceded that in England every branch of manufacture is improved to an extreme degree; every field properly cultivated and every man sufficiently comfortable and happy—it cannot be denied but that every guinea which is transported to this part of the incorporate kingdom is a proportionate loss to the industrious English—if this argument is well founded—it is most evident that those who in England support an Union, go much further to advance the interests of Ireland, than the most over-heated Irish patriots ever thought of proceeding. The former from necessity are contented to ameliorate the condition of the Irish by diminishing the comforts of the English. Whereas the latter certainly only professed to improve Ireland

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by making the means of their country subservient to that end.

But why have the great mass of the people of England been indifferent on this occasion. Have they been characterised by an easy and complying nature where the interests of the two countries were supposed to clash? Their indifference must arise from one another of these causes. Either because their country has no capital to spare from its own industry, and if it had Ireland is one of the last countries in Europe to which it would find its way, or because there are the same employments for capital in England that there could be in Ireland, and as both islands are to be subjected to the same superintending legislature, Capitalists may as well be subject to that control in their own nation, parish or city, as go travelling through the empire for a new advantageous situation and become outcasts for the paltry gain of one or two per cent., and that all things being otherwise equal, the partiality for their native soil must naturally prevail. That in any case no danger can be apprehended from the measure. Believe me that men will reason seriously and think cautiously before they will transport the hopes of themselves and their posterity. Can you suppose when the rancorous and uncouth hostility of two orders of people or the various orders of the state is made the most plausible argument for an Union—that a man of large commercial property

erty will not turn away with disgust from a country which could have given an opportunity for such a mode of reasoning. Is it likely when he finds that the inhabitants of this country, never did and are never likely to agree among themselves, that he will conclude they must be enamoured with the person or the property of the person—the government of whose country is too generally conceived to be the cause of all their unfortunate dissensions. There is one feeling for which he will give every Irishman credit, because it is a natural one, because he experiences it himself, the love of country:—though God knows we have a clumsy and an awkward mode of exhibiting that attachment. He will recollect that it is just as difficult to eradicate the love of country, or of the little platoon or subdivision to which we belong, as to blot the country itself out of the system of nature,—it is impossible. He knows that the Highlander and Welchman feel this partial affection, though every principle of interest, though every sense of general policy, most strongly counteract it, and though in fact it is surprising how Scotland and Wales could ever have had a separate interest or distinct existence from England. Depend on it, he will consider what the feelings of the Irish may be, when year after year their country will suffer more than the pang of instant death, in a painful and protracted dissolution—when nation-

al interest, to say nothing of a sense of wrongs more operative than interest itself, takes fast hold of the social affections, and reviews and calls into action the sublime and eternal feelings, which nature herself has imprinted on the human heart, which will increase with extension, and expand with the progress of time, as sentiments of a sublime and immortal nature.

If in urging these arguments I am so unfortunate as to be esteemed tedious—let it be remembered that in the eyes of every reflecting independent man, there are no other as far as relate to the expediency or in expediency of this measure entitled to so great estimation—I shall not trouble you with what may be esteemed false pride, or with what would expose me to the laughter and contempt of every Unionist, arguments drawn from the moral advantages of a resident Legislature—a Legislature which by the by has been reduced and industriously brought into any odium which may attach to it, to furnish the argument now drawn from its corrupted state, and which it is idle in my mind to presume, would not turn its eyes to the amelioration of the country at large, if this measure was buried in eternal oblivion!

But though the silence of the English nation may forsooth arise from their unprecedented and unbounded liberality to Ireland, the silence of a particular part of that people cannot be easily
mistaken

mistaken—I speak not now of persons who though they are very useful to the minister, yet who seldom feel, that to enjoy at the expence of the community is often a false calculation, because the result may at length be disgust and detestation. I speak of these *Thorntons*, these *Giles*, and these *Tbellussons*, these massy pillars of unvested capital, of these great barometers of national ruin or prosperity, which would sink to the point of misery and despair, if they could discover any secret passage by which the capital of England could discharge itself to recruit or invigorate any country but their own. These men, evidently observe in an Union the deep silent flow of a steady stream of wealth setting in from Ireland; or else their moans, their clamours and their complaints would foment and embitter the mass of discontent, and spread alarm and dismay through the whole island of Great Britain.

So far have I endeavoured by a grave foresight to dissipate the illusions of fancy and of error. If there is any thing in my argument, this measure cannot be beneficial to both countries, though it may be to one of them. If Capital must necessarily be transported to Ireland, it must serve Ireland: if that be not the consequence, what can she gain by it? It is therefore evident to my understanding that, in proportion as we see this measure preferred to the exclusion of measures which may advance the interests of the Empire in general, without trenching on those
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of Ireland in particular, in that proportion we ought to distrust and disregard the promises which are made, and the arguments which are advanced.

As to Scotland, after the comparison which has been drawn between that country and this, in the incomparable speech of that man (need I name the Speaker of the Irish Commons,) to whom and to whose children, feeling as I do on this question—I think that Ireland cannot be too grateful for his conduct through this business, it is almost unnecessary to write upon that subject. All we can concede is that Scotland might have been more injured by attempting to remain separate, than she has been, even by the Union. Scotland is an absolute loser by so much of her capital as is annually spent in England, whether it is remitted to pay her share of taxes, or to absentees. That some hundreds of Scotchmen annually are preferred to elevated situations by the English government, is not to be drawn as an argument of the advantage of the measure to Scotland at large. Scotland loses less, however, than any other country could lose under similar circumstances. The predilection the Scotch have for their country is notorious to all. Every guinea which can be gleaned in other countries by parsimony, by industry, by venality, is sure to be remitted to their own, to improve patrimony, to purchase new estates, or to be vested in native manufactures. But Ireland must not only be a loser, by so much of her

her capital as is sent to her absentees, by taxes sent to keep down the interest of her old debt, which will be merged into that of England, and by new taxes laid on every year to supply the wants of the empire; but she must be a greater loser than Scotland, by the hereditary disgust and alienation of mind of her men of large fortunes to their native country. For instance, there is the marquis of Lansdown, a great statesman, who knows full well that England never can give up Ireland on any condition, short of her own complete ruin. A great observer of nations and of mankind, a man not contracted in his views, and certainly not the creature of unworthy prejudices; and yet I see that the paper of the day, though the Union is likely to take place, contains an advertisement for the sale of some of his Irish property: Though this nobleman feels, I am persuaded, from the high honour and integrity of his agent, that that part of his estate which lies in the west of Ireland, is as well, if not better managed, than that of any other absentee. Whatever respect I bear him, I own I cannot reconcile his desire to sell at this moment, with his expectation that his Irish estate would rise considerably in value by an Union. But why should I refer to any individual? I should be glad to know who that absentee is, who is fond of suffering his rents to accumulate, for the purpose of extending his fortune by purchasing in Ireland.

It

It is no answer to this argument, that the Union would cure this alienated mind, and render property more secure. Is not Ireland as secure as any island in the West Indies? Is it not a much greater object for the guardian vigilance of England, than Martinique or Jamaica? Is the Irish peasant more ferocious than the Indian with his scalping knife, the Carib, or the Maroon? And yet, taking a fair estimate as far as the very different natures of these things will admit, calculating their relative produce, and ascertaining their relative value, sure I am that an Irish estate might be hawked in London among the Irish absentees for ever and remain unsold, when a plantation estate would find a purchaser in half an hour. This is the effect of that alienated affection, which an Union will encrease, it cannot diminish it.

That no part of Ireland can be benefited, and that every trade and manufacture of native growth—must be GRADUALLY put down by an UNION.

But the loss of capital to Ireland will not be so deplorable in its immediate, as in its consequential disadvantages. The wealth of Ireland which will be transmitted to England, will have as little chance of flowing back, as money sent from Ireland to the farthest extremities of the globe. This wealth will not only have an annual tendency to re-animate such manufactures in England as may require an infusion of new life, but it will open new sources of industry in England. Instead of re-transportation, even of our own wealth, from England to Ireland, or an order from the absentees to have the money which they could save

any measure which may interrupt confidence, or depress the nation, will not vibrate through its remotest extremities, until failure follows failure, and until the whole of our rashness and our folly is discovered in the encrease of the poor, the deficiency of revenue, and the general oppression and misery of the people.

Those are not fancy pictures. The proposal of such measure in the best days of national exaltation and commercial splendor, may be attended with the most alarming consequences. But to propose it in a devastating war, whose consequences no human wisdom can foresee, to attempt it at a period when the whole commercial world has been shaken to its centre, when many individuals in both nations, with the most solid capitals, are compelled to stop payment, from the general stagnation of trade, from the return of bills, and from sudden demands being made, which they cannot answer at once, argues a courage little short of despair. Our country has indeed been in a most distracted situation, but for its misfortunes, an Union is not the remedy. The war becomes thro' Europe more than ever the cause of internal calamities, and peace is the only effectual cure. That man must have moved in a narrow circle, who has not been able to discern, that with the widely clashing views, the different interests, and the wild and quixotic speculations prevalent in the Irish mind, so far from an Union having

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any

qualities calculated to hush the warring elements of faction and of passion into repose, that nothing can soften the reciprocal indignation of discordant factions, but prudent management, an efficient resident government, and a general peace.

But though for the purpose of argument it may now be conceded, that no commercial advantage can be derived from an Union, yet it may be contended, that the benefits to result from this measure, in securing our connexion with England, and increasing the stability of the empire, are so very great, that it is neither wise nor prudent to oppose it. That benevolence which would voluntarily sacrifice its own advantages to advance the prosperity of another, has never been, and is not now, the characteristic of any country; and the most obvious answer to an argument of this kind is, that let our good wishes for the empire be ever so great, the particular prosperity of our own country must ever predominate.

Present
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ion main-
tained.

But against the body of Unionists in both countries, I take as a presiding principle, the principle of alliance or reciprocal allegiance to a common king, against that of Union: and contend, that by acting on this principle, we are more likely to give stability to empire, than by proceeding on any other principle whatever.—It is only, by the most ingenious sophistry, that Union and dominion are not shewn to be completely analogous. There can be no doubt but that

that by an Union, as complete a legislative supremacy may be maintained over Ireland, as opposed to England when the representatives of the English nation feel an inclination or an interest in exercising that supremacy, as could proceed from naked uncontrouled dominion. It is clear in the event of an Union, that such a generous attention to the interests of Ireland as the nature of the case will admit, must proceed more from the prudential and honourable motives of the British members, than from any possibility of their being controuled by persons naturally allied or peculiarly interested in the property of this part of the empire. The argument drawn from the Irish members having a right to legislate for England, has no weight; they can never be a majority. So that when the Unionists contend that our having a resident legislature, without any interest in our prosperity, and under a compleat subserviency to that power with which we are called on to unite, is our irremediable evil, they then very sagaciously endeavour to shew, that an Union with that very power, which occasioned the native legislature not having that lively interest in our prosperity, is for all our misfortunes the safest and most certain remedy. In other words, the greater the injury we receive, the greater the confidence we should bestow on the power who inflicts it—if it is true therefore, that as the countries stand connected at present, there are
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some evils, it is no less true that in the event of an Union there would be positive evils also, and on the great view of present connexion and of an Union, the positive presiding evils being equal—all things being equal in this respect, the collateral argument is hollow against the measure.

Between Union and dominion there is no essential difference. In a close and steady alliance there may be all the advantages which we are told will flow from an Union, without any of the disadvantages which are ascribed to that measure. What rights, what advantages are there which we did not possess under the Constitution of Ireland which we could possess by incorporation? The constitutions are identically the same. If your legislature is corrupt, a spotless purity is not the characteristic of an English House of Commons. The governing part of mankind in every country, are not exempt from this imputation. If we are to credit the new revolutionists in France, corruption had pervaded every department in the state, even before its government had a seven years duration. If for the purpose of putting down rebellion, the most valuable part of the constitution has been surrendered for the preservation of the whole, is it to be credited, that so long as the causes which create the necessity of keeping up a strong military government subsist, that government will not be maintained? Are we so blind as not to foresee that the same means

means which were used to preserve the connexion when it was essayed, would not be had recourse to, to preserve the incorporation if it was endangered? Is it fair to draw arguments from those extremes; and if the complaint of the day is, that we have no actual national government, that it is the English minister who dictates every thing, that we have a government only in name; how can that complaint be removed, by shewing that in theory and in reality, we have lost all national government of every kind? To those who did not complain before, Union is insult; to those who did complain before, it is an aggravation of the evil. Indeed the events of the world do not weaken the observation of an eloquent writer, when he says, that though a man of warm speculative benevolence may wish his society otherwise constituted than he finds it, yet that a good and a true politician will always consider how he shall make the most of the existing materials of his country. A disposition to preserve, and an ability to improve, would be my standard of a statesman; every thing else is vulgar in the conception, and perilous in the execution. I so far agree with Mr. Burke in condemning no form of Government on abstract principles—but I own I would rather estimate all Governments by the blessings which they administer and the protection they afford, than by forms of any kind. Sure I am that when that eloquent writer whose words

words I have now quoted, says "that a disposition to preserve and an ability to improve would be his standard of a statesman," that he might very well have enforced his sentiment, by shewing on the authority of all history, that the evils which have been occasioned by pulling down any system, which has answered in any tolerable degree for the common purposes of society, have entailed more dreadful consequences than the actual continuation of the evil intended to be removed. Looking therefore at the nature of things, rather than the humours of men, I must contend on every view of our relative situations, the resources, the genius and the temper of Irishmen, on every principle of national interest, safety and prosperity, of advantage even to England herself, that this island is not calculated to become a shred or scrap of Empire, that the attempt to make her so will occasion external weakness and never ceasing conspiracy, and having my mind by the Constitution of the land, by the habits of national education, by the uniform declaration of the most virtuous and discerning of mankind, as well as by the dictates of my own calm deliberative and unbiassed reason, impressed with the advantage of distinct Legislatures—I do look back to the bloodless revolution of 1782 as one of the happiest in the history of mankind. "Here no rage, no phrensy pulled down more in an half hour than prudence, deliberation,

deliberation and foresight could build up in an hundred years." Then it was that the most happy Revolution was effected, on principles the most purely pacific; though the pious hands which carried it into execution have lately been subjected to the severest chastisement, and been rebuked as ungrateful children, who took advantage of the distresses of their parent, when they demanded and obtained what never ought to have been withheld, the common rights of mankind. Why is it that the recollection of these events is dear to every Irishman? Because they saw happily effected without any interruption to the good harmony essential to the preservation of these islands, what otherwise might arise from devastating war. Whilst dominion was usurped, it was unprofitable, even whilst the appearance of it remained, the connection was insecure.

Happy æra! Happy nation! And yet how happy the recollection of these happy times!

No longer did the wretched inhabitant of this afflicted country, sit with his charts and compasses before him, navigating his way to any foreign clime—for in no other country was he denied the privileges refused him in his own;—no longer did he sit upon the shores of his impoverished and deserted island, gazing on the hills of an unfriendly sister, who emancipated the African the moment he put his foot upon her soil, whilst she retained so many millions of her nearest neighbours in

an abject and unworthy vassalage;—no sooner did the sun of our independence appear above our horizon, than languid nature felt its influence and utility, the music of the shuttle and the song of the ploughman were every where substituted for the throbs of famished multitudes heaved under the tyranny of corrupt power—how many calamities were then soothed, how many tears were then wiped away;—how many sources of comfort were then opened to the genius and the industry of man. I own that it is with a mixture of religious awe and pious admiration that I look back upon the occurrences of these times—when the causes of the dissensions between the two islands were discussed with so much moderation, when a laudable and generous ambition was not circumscribed within the sphere of party, and when the result was an amiable return to that mutual benevolence and forgiving friendship, which re-united family to family, city to city, and nation to nation, which gave a farm to the peasant, and a shop to the artist, and gave to so many millions a scope and vegetation in the system of the universe, which they never before had the good fortune to enjoy.—These were the times for national exultation, particularly when added to the other advantages which we received from it, we daily saw returning to their proper hemisphere, these bodies which had previously moved in a distant firmament, and saw them beginning to perform

form in the midst of their looped and ragged tenantry, the same part which the sun acts in the firmament of Heaven, cherishing, protecting, fostering, illumining and retaining in their proper sphere the planets which move around him.

I know that it is the effort of a party of the day to under-rate and to under-value the occurrences of these times. The principle of the arrangement was a good one, and all that can be said against it is, that it has been abused. There is nothing human which I could not condemn with the same candour and propriety. Would I be listened to a single moment if I rose in the British parliament, and contended that because the influence of the crown was encreased to an alarming degree, therefore the revolution of 1688, by which the king holds his crown and the people their liberties—was a weak, miserable, inefficient occurrence. Yet the one would be just as good an argument as the other.—If when an innumerable body of that which was styled the London Corresponding Society instead of holding its last meeting, surrounded with magistrates and their guards, having its orators dragged from their tribunes,—itself routed and dispersed,—if instead of this this body had conspired in secret, had been exercised in concealed places as it was charged with being exercised—had collected arms, and proceeded to deluge England with blood—would it be right to charge the revolution of 1688, or the

the memory of Lord Somers with being the cause of the catastrophe—yet we are called on in this country to deny if we can, that the late rebellion was not the fruit of the blessed tree that was planted in 1782 by the hands of Mr. Grattan—In the very same breath we are called on to substitute the Constitution of England for that of Ireland, as if the Constitution of England had not been assailed, before that of Ireland was openly attacked—Is the Irish Government considerably weakened by its successful resistance to that artfully planned system of assault, which in its execution astonished every man, except those who owed it to the state to watch its proceedings, or to those (melancholy fatality, that it ever should have been projected!) whose business it was to direct its operations? Shall numbers of the best men of Ireland who never harboured a treasonable intention, but who could not contemplate the cruel and heart-rending manner in which the public mind was teized and fretted, and who could not observe the Constitution sapped and undermined at one side by the assaults of power, on the other exposed to annihilation by the most infuriate excesses of a maddened people, without a melancholy bordering on despair, be now cheered up and re-animated by this sovereign restorative? In such times it is indeed most true that men of this description are mere blanks in the system of
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the universe. But would it not be a most flagrant absurdity to infer, that because men looked at the past scenes with regret, that therefore they must necessarily become enamoured of a measure, which to say no worse of it, appears to have its origin in the meanest and blindest malice. Is it fair to infer because your Constitution of 1782 has so long been mouldering in the grave, that even the monumental records of what it was, are in danger of being effaced from the page of history, that therefore in a start of phrenzy you should be borne through all the stages of malignity, and induced to assign every remaining part to a speedy and eternal oblivion! It is indeed an arduous undertaking to calm all the little busy and fretful passions, that hurry partizans into enquiries pregnant with every kind of danger, and into altercations out of which there is no creeping without the most destructive calamities. But let it be remembered that it is not impossible to employ partial evils in effecting the common good: that it is not impossible, that by mutual concessions, the jarring claims of contending factions might not yet be reconciled, and that by mutual forbearance and a steady Government the wounds of this bleeding country might not yet be staunched.

And here it is that it may properly be expected that I should express an opinion on the competence or incompetence of Parliament to effect this change.

Competence of
Parliament de-
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change. I contend that every principle of the British Constitution as established in 1688, and of the Irish Constitution as established in 1782, is abandoned, and that every commentary which has been written on these Constitutions is a mockery and insult to the understanding, if this measure is sanctioned and allowed; and I likewise maintain that the doctrines on which the dissolution of our legislature is justified, so far from being circumscribed in their application to this country, or this identical constitution, tend to total subversion, not only of all regular governments in all modes, and to all the stable securities of established institutions, but to every rule and principle of morality itself. How do those advocates who would give the feeble efforts of weak finite mortals all the properties, all the attributes which belong to the godhead proceed? they beg the question. When they are nearly run down by shewing that Union and revolution are completely analogous, and cannot morally be justified, they skulk and abandon the question of right, and retreat behind the inexpediency of the revolution which they intend, and the power with which they are armed to carry it into execution. Might and right are then convertible terms. The cautious and wily Mr. Pitt, aware of the danger of pushing the argument to the extreme extent, gave full scope for his great declamatory powers by the most miserable distortion of facts. He either contended that

that the arrangement of 1782 was not final nor conclusive, (though I for one have in the six last years heard him repeatedly upbraid Mr. Fox for even alluding to the affairs of a country governed by its OWN FREE, DISTINCT, AND INDEPENDENT LEGISLATURE) or he admitted the fact, and then after a sweeping panegyric and a lofty flourish on the omnipotence of Parliament, *there he left the question*. These extreme cases are not in the view of the British Constitution. Though such a measure may be effected by violence and power, it cannot be defended on any of its principles. That Constitution was invested with an immortal character, and it modestly presumes that those who are entrusted with its administration, will imbibe the spirit of its canonized founders, look back upon their ancestors, and look forward to their posterity. It does indeed foresee instances, when it may be necessary that its rights should be re-affirmed, such as at 1688; but it sees no possible event which could justify its being buried in an eternal grave. That Constitution reposes too much on its wisdom, its virtue and its humanity, to believe that it ever could become a subject for attack, and it relies with the fondest hope and the most endearing simplicity, that when an assault is made on it from any quarter, it will be honourably and courageously repulsed. This is its character, this its security. What are those weapons with which it is assaulted by unhallowed and ungrateful

ful hands. A noble lord* (of another country) has facetiously asserted, that all the arguments against the competence of Parliament have been taken from the democratic school, and as his enthusiasm kindles as he advances, he contends that this happy change can alone be disliked by the most incorrigible jacobins of both nations; and when he comes to his peroration, he equally accuses those persons for their alacrity to destroy, and their disposition to defend, and lest he might not keep pace with those who support the question in the double manner to which I have already alluded; the noble Lord is more inclined to be stigmatized for absurdity in argument, than deficiency in abuse: *and there he leaves the question.*

A RIGHT REVEREND, AND CERTAINLY VERY LEARNED PRELATE † took upon himself to discuss the abstract point, whether Parliament had a right to vote its own extinction? and if that right was well founded, whether it did not apply as well to the British as the Irish Parliament; and after asserting, (what nobody can deny) that right and obligation are correlative terms, and if men did not know their rights, they could not understand what constituted obligation, and then declaring that it was a question on which unanimity could not be expected,—*there he left the question.* Ano-

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* Lord Auckland. † Bishop of Landaff.

ther noble Lord *, the once viceroy of Corsica, a man well versed certainly in the formation of constitutions, but not equally happy in giving them a permanent and hereditary feature, after considering with no common ability the question of Union in the view of the relative situations of the two countries, at last comes to the question of competence ; and then declares that to one description of the people of Ireland the *ultima ratio regum* could be the only answer ; and when he argued the question with the other, he justified the propriety of Parliament voting its own extinction, first on the expediency of the measure, (the question at issue) and secondly by assuming the unlimited supremacy of the Irish Parliament (the thing to be proved) *and there he left the question.* The other lords † who have printed their speeches and transmitted them for re-publication in Ireland, have supported the universal faculties of Parliament, and its competence to this specific measure of a Legislative Union with another country; by two sorts of authority, on the opinions of learned and eminent men, such as *Lord Somers* and the whigs of 1688, whose opinions by the by are completely adverse to such proceedings ; and 2dly by endeavouring to make the precedents taken from other governments long destroyed, precedents for our subverting our own. They attempt

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* Lord Minto.

† Lords Bordington and Grenville.

to convert that which at best is only an argument on the expediency of Union, into a philosophic analogy, between different governments; and they draw this extraordinary inference, that because the British Constitution has subverted some minor neighbouring governments, therefore the British Constitution has a right to destroy itself. In other words, because there was an Union of the Heptarchy—because England is England, and England has extended her government over Wales and over Scotland, both of whose Constitutions, for what I know, or for what I care, authorised those entrusted with their administration to destroy them at pleasure, *ergo*, it is a constitutional principle in the English (that is to say Irish) Government that it may vote its own dissolution. This is the mode of argument adopted in England, and pursued in all the speeches and pamphlets of unionists in Ireland. But what renders the attempt to reply to those topics most truly afflicting to me, is the painful reflection of being present when most of those very personages, applauded the grant of 4000*l.* per annum pension (to that man whose memory I venerate now, in the same proportion that I was enraptured with his great talents then,—I mean Mr. Burke) for employing his imperial fancy in laying all nature under contribution, when he maintained in his writings, and they supported in their speeches, doctrines the most adverse indeed to those which they have now ventured to express—

express—doctrines, which if ever countenanced, will transmit this melancholy absurdity to posterity; that though for ten years every kind of innovation was rejected for fear of leading to a revolution, yet that when revolution itself was proposed, it was not only acceded to with pleasure and complacency, but justified on principles strictly constitutional.

O melancholy instance of human inconsistency!—When the professions, the arguments, the truths maintained during a controversy of ten years are now, that a superior state feels it her interest, and sees that she has the power to sport with the sacred blessings of a portion of mankind,—forgotten and denied. Let us collect all the arguments on the competence of Parliament, and they will be found reducible under one of those heads: 1st, Principles of Constitution,—2d, Precedent,—3d, Authority,—4th, Power. The first head involves those points: What is the quantity of power? and what is the quality of the trust confided to Parliament? The fallacy of the whole argument respecting the competence of Parliament, depends on an assumption on the part of Parliament individually, of those rights which belong to the whole nation collectively. I defy any person to shew one instance in which any writer on the laws of nations or on the constitutions of states, maintains that the legislative power can change the Constitution, except where the nation has in express
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terms given it the express power of change; or except where the legislative enters into a debate on the propriety of making a total change in the government, and the whole nation is voluntarily silent upon it, in which case this silence is to be considered as an approbation of the acts of its representatives.—The Constitution of a State ought to be fixed, and since that was first established by the nation which afterwards trusted certain persons with the legislative power; the fundamental laws are excepted from their commission. These legislators derive their power from the Constitution, and they cannot change it without destroying the foundation of their authority.

The principle of change is not that of the British Constitution. For the best reasons that principle was reprobated at the revolution—because the men who directed it were moderate and wise, and because the history of the ancient republics particularly that of Athens shewed them that principle was contrary to the happiness of society, and was at length fatal to the liberty of the Athenian people, of which they were so jealous without knowing how to enjoy it. In our Constitution the two houses of Parliament in concert with the King exercise the legislative power, and if there is no moral and social obligation to preserve the form of Government—the two houses of Parliament might resolve to suppress themselves, and with the concurrence of the king invest

invest him with the full and absolute Government, as well as it might vote its own dissolution. The Constitution saw how far the principle might be pushed and it truly never recognized it—*so much for principle!*

As for precedent, I have endeavoured before to make a distinction between the government of a country receiving a few members within its own bosom; and that government voting its own dissolution. There is a material difference in my humble comprehension between the Parliament of Ireland agreeing to receive a few members from the kingdom of Kerry (supposing it independent), and that Parliament sealing its own death warrant—neither the submission of Wales, the treaty with Scotland;—nor the exercise of the power on the part of the British Parliament, can at all influence this question. There is a great difference between extending the power of the state, and destroying the means by which all power may be extended. It is not to be contended because the gentlemen of the House of Commons may hire out the “*USUFRUCT*” of their voices, that therefore they have a right to part with the *FEE* and *INHERITANCE*,*—much less because they have the power to extend the Constitution to others, they therefore have a right to destroy the Constitution itself—what is most like a constitutional precedent for our Legislature exercising a sovereign

* Burke.

sovereign controul, is, what is vulgarly called the *revolution* of 1688. It is contended that the proceedings of these days were not of less importance, than any Union, or any other national event that is either known or can be imagined; and that therefore as there is no difference between the greatness of the object to be atchieved, there is no difference between the power to be exercised. I assert that it was under the very fear that such an argument might be adduced, that the Commons declared an abhorrence against innovation of any kind, lest it might shake the submission of posterity to the Constitution:— They declared that the throne was abdicated— They maintained the principles of the Constitution, they did not destroy it. *So much for precedent.* Now as to authority, it is to those who re-asserted the existing Government of England (of which that of Ireland is a perfect transcript) that we must naturally refer, and I undertake to say, that Lord Somers and the whigs of 1688, proceeded on this principle “that an uninterrupted inheritance furnished the surest principle of conservation and the safest principle of transmission, without excluding the principle of improvement, and that the British Constitution gloried in the idea of being transmitted to posterity in the same manner in which we transmit property and life.” It was therefore that at the trial of *Saacheverel*, that *Sir Joseph Jekyl*, Mr.

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Lechmere, Walpole, and Sir John Holland, all disclaimed the ruinous doctrine of the power of Parliament extending to the new modelling the state. They countenanced no doctrine amounting to a dissolution of the contract between the crown and the people, which they contended always had an existence. They gave no precedent to authorise the change in the form of government; but they were uniform and consistent in their endeavours to prevent the regal power being swallowed up on pretence of popular rights, or the popular rights being destroyed on pretence of legislative power. They did as Mr. Burke well expressed it (in his speech in the House of Commons in 1790,) "they prevented a revolution and disclaimed all competency to make one; they took solid securities—they settled doubtful questions and corrected anomalies in our law, in the stable fundamental parts they made no revolution—the nation kept the same ranks—the same orders—the same privileges—the same franchises—the same commons—the same corporations and the same electors," they neither impaired the monarchy nor voted their dissolution; and to use the words of the Whigs themselves "to innovate on the Constitution could not be allowed, nay it would have been a crime—the revolution did not introduce any innovation, it was only the restoration of the ancient fundamental Constitution

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of the kingdom and giving it its proper force and energy."

This is a painful argument to those who have ever loved or admired the best principles of our mixed form of Government. These are bitter sensations to those who like myself are just able to remember that they saw, or thought they saw in the year 1782 the Sun of Irish Independence, rising with majesty and grandeur above the horizon, cautiously and gradually dispelling the black clouds of bigotry and prejudice; drying up those places which were watered with tears and wetted with the blood of a divided and discontented people. These are heart-rending notions to those who have been educated in the best principles of that Constitution, who have considered it a pledge of national amity and love, and who have no reason to change the opinion of their early life, that it had all the rudiments essential to good Government. These are the days of recommencing affliction to those who have been compelled to narrow their converse to the intimacy of a few, whose liberality, mild and lovely, would like the "sober evenings ray," unite the discordant elements into peace, lest the tranquillity of society might be shattered by the wild and undisciplined contentions of religious and political enthusiasts, or its harmony untuned by the riotous inurbanity of maddened bigotry. Indeed the Unionists may if they please gnaw the Constitution as established

blished in 1782 with vermin whispers, and worry it with unbecoming reproaches. But that Constitution denies that it ever gave any power to those who should be entrusted with its care, to extinguish it for ever. It says "indeed *it is difficult to give limits to the mere abstract competence of the supreme power, but the limits of a moral competence, subjecting occasional will to permanent reason, and to the steady maxims of faith, justice, and fixed fundamental policy, are perfectly intelligible, and perfectly binding on those who exercise any authority under any name, or under any title in the state.—The House of Lords is not morally competent to dissolve itself, nor to abdicate, if it would, its portion of the Legislature of the kingdom. By as strong or a stronger reason, the House of Commons cannot renounce its share of authority. The engagement and pact of society which generally goes by the name of the Constitution, forbids such innovation and such surrender. The constituent parts of a state must hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive a serious interest under their engagement, as much as the whole state is bound to keep its faith with separate communities. Otherwise competence and power would be entirely confounded, and no law left but the will of a prevailing force."—These are

* Burke's reflections.

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my reasons for denying the competence of Parliament to destroy the Constitution of Ireland, and if they are not conclusive and satisfactory I see no cause why the Imperial Legislature might not as well vote an Union with France, as the parliament of Ireland vote an Union with Great Britain.

Close connexion with England thro' the medium of a resident legislature invigorated and improved, tried as a conservative principle for Ireland and the Empire.

Here then in my opinion, this enquiry might very safely be closed. If this measure is on re-examination calculated to depress your country,—if there is no power in Parliament to effect this change, what other topics are there which require to be investigated? yes, there are great difficulties still to be overcome,—difficulties which no feeling mind can look at without a tear, but which no magnanimous heart could let pass without suitable observation. Since I have ventured to express an opinion on a great subject, to a great and enlightened public, I feel it a duty which I owe that public, a duty which I owe my own character as a man, not to be broken down or discouraged by any obstacles which the unhappy situation of the world in general, or the more afflicting situation of this country in particular, may throw in the way of a generous policy and an endearing magnanimity. When therefore I attempt to explore all the difficulties, all the dangers which hang over this country, I think I can commence such a career with a mind at least untainted with malignity, with base factious views, or vindictive malice, but

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not without its being considerably awed by a fearful sense of the uncertainty which impends over all the judgments and all the affairs of men. I know that in the divided and distracted state of Ireland, I have no reason to expect that I shall ever hear the grateful music of my country's estimation for expressing the honest sentiments of my heart. If on the other hand, I shall be certain of meeting the sneers of the desperate, and the frowns of the powerful, I shall on the other have all the consolation which arises from the exercise of a calm, unbiassed, and deliberative reason, disclaiming to be sed with the visions and imaginations of things, which even if effected, could never be realized without the reciprocated retaliations of blood and rapine, and without greater sacrifices than any country under Heaven was ever yet necessitated to make.—I do say then, that under all the melancholy and afflicting scenes which we have witnessed in our own country, under all the circumstances of Europe, under the various commercial and political relations in which we stand to Great Britain, under every view of national interest and imperial policy, the greatest possible good which can arise to Ireland, with the least possible evil, is a connexion with England on principles which England can subscribe to, without the sacrifice of her dearest interests or her dignity, and which Ireland can adhere to without the surrender of her honor. A resident legislature,

statute and her existing constitution cleansed, as much as the unionists please, of those abuses which have been admitted upon all sides since the commencement of the present discussion. These are no times, when all confidence between all descriptions of persons of all nations is cut up, for any persons of any nation to repose an unbounded confidence in the professions of strangers. These are no times for having our politics dependent on every ship which sails from the port of our enemy; or veering and shifting in our speculations, when a new battalion is attached to *the army of England*.—No, no, they are times for cleaving to some vigorous and manly principles which arrest our common notice, because they embrace our common interest.

Every step I approach the principle already laid down, I see the restoration of national peace and increased security to the British empire.—When I turn my back upon it, there is nothing stable, nothing permanent, nothing secure. One dreary dreadful vista of national ruin presents itself,—of clashing claims, and quixotic speculations. One thing certain arising out of the extravagant subtilities and eccentric roving of our minds, the destruction of this commercial country, and the slaughter of multitudes of the bravest and the most virtuous of the community. Take any other principle, and we confound all measure between means and ends—our headlong desires become our politics

tics and our morals. On one side we have France bristling in arms, covered over with her bracelets and adulterous trinkets, breathing the most seductive but destructive promises, and incapable of realizing EVEN the pure professions of love and affection, without almost blotting the country out of the system of nature. When we translate the words: "attempt at SEPARATION from England by the assistance of French force," we must set down so much for the marches and counter-marches of conflicting armies, for defeats and victories,—so much for the workings of ferocious passions raised to their greatest height by mutual revenge and reciprocal outrages,—so much for slaughter in the field, so much for secret murders and muffled conspiracies,—so much for famine brought upon a province,—so much for the suspension of every kind of trade,—so much for widows and orphans,—so much for massacres and assassinations in every place—of every kind,—so much for the confiscations and permutations of property of those who opposed that enemy, presuming him successful,—so much for thousands doomed to waste away an existence in the dreary precincts of a prison, or to perish on a scaffold, supposing him defeated and subdued,—so much for Great Britain whilst undisputed mistress of the seas, diminishing (if the enemy succeeded) the means of his assault on her own territory, by destroying every thing which contributed to our
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national strength,—so much for this enemy drawing his resources from an harassed and impoverished land, in proportion to the violence and vigor with which he was assailed,—so much for letting loose the daemons of rapine and lust within the field of cultivated society, and giving to the brutal ferocity of the most ferocious its full scope and range of invention. There is no occasion to heighten this picture by recurring to the conduct which this enemy has pursued, to those countries he has invaded, nor no necessity to examine those new principles which have emanated from minds—full grown and matured. Whether defeated, whether successful, these are a few of the certain, positive, and immediate evils, which rush on my imagination, when in one view of the question I depart from the presiding principle which I have already stated,—*close connexion with England, through the medium of a resident legislature, invigorated and improved.*—

*When rashness drives
Impetuous on, the scourge of Heaven uplifted
Lashes the Fury forward.*—

Again is it for ever to be the great misfortune of our nature, not to know where to stop, or how to compound with situations? Are we to lose all we have ever gained, because we cannot obtain all we have ever wanted? We would do well likewise to translate this word Union; and

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if I have failed in convincing your minds, I have at least satisfied my own, that it is a measure on the part of a superior state, of loftiness, confidence, and rigor, when moderation, prudence and equality ought to be pursued. It is an abandonment of the long tried, long valued *principle of balding communities together by an evident and solid interest*, for the little wretched, shifting politics of the day. It is a feeble attempt to disturb and force nature, and to occasion what is generally the consequence of such an interruption of the arrangement she has made, discontent, distrust and confusion. I shall not heighten the picture, because I shall entertain the supposition that it never will be realized, and because I write not for the applause of a giddy populace, but to the calm and approving judgment of enlightened men. — Here then I see nothing but misery to the country and consequently weakness to the Empire, when I depart from the presiding, immutable principle which I have already laid down, *close connection with England, through the medium of a resident Legislature invigorated and improved.*

But let us weigh every thing with prudence and with care. What is the present situation of the country? The existing government considerably strengthened, 1st, by proving itself superior to plans madly laid, and desperately attempted; and secondly, by the strong continuing recollection on the part of all ranks and descriptions of people,

1st, By a review of the state of Ireland.

ple, of the dreadful evils of their letting loose a populace ; and certainly not weakened in the eyes of any rational and reflecting man, by the extraordinary scenes which we have witnessed in another country. Defended from without, by a navy unequalled in the best time of British history ; and within, with a more gallant and powerful army, than the history of Ireland can furnish an example of. The taxes not unproductive (thanks to the foresight and liberality with which the new *Chancellor of the Exchequer* has commenced his career) under all the pressure of the times, and the melancholy extent to which this unhappy war has been protracted—I do not declare that there are not causes, for dejection, for humiliation, for sorrow ; all I assert is, that there are none for despair. Therefore it is that I might apply the words which were used by *Demosthenes* to induce the Athenians not to sink under, but to bear up against, the pressure of their misfortunes. We have indeed reason to rejoice that we can draw our future hopes from our past calamities, for if we had acted in every thing as we ought, and the alienation of mind and the religious and political dissensions between the inhabitants of the same country were in the situation they now are, there could have remained no hope of better days—in what causes these dissensions have originated—how they have been inflamed to their present deplorable and disastrous extent—or in what man-

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ner they can be cured, are topics I thank God wholly irrevelant to the present discussion. They are for the Legislature—all I know is this, that the sooner they are corrected, the sooner the Government will be respected by the country, and the sooner it will be formidable to all its enemies. To say that these errors cannot be cured, that the hand which inflicted the wound cannot be stretched forth to administer the remedy, and ensure the cure, is most extravagant indeed—it argues such an ignorance of human nature, and such a lack of the knowledge of the history of mankind—not to be satisfied, that the most inveterate evils—and the most sour and malignant prejudices might be made to bend before the exertions of a manly-minded legislature, that I own I can hardly think that arguments to the contrary deserve to be treated with the mildness of rebuke. But instead of shunning enquiry, or running away from the review of the correction of these defects, (and great God, what government is free from fault) in the present situation of the world, if our legislature assumed a manly front and persevering intrepidity, sure I am that it never had so favourable an opportunity for binding up our frame of polity with our dearest domestic ties, and giving both our constitution and our property a stability which they never before possessed. What is government, and what is there in the character of Irishmen, that should fill a strong steady government with fear, alarm, and apprehension,

in performing all the great duties of humanity.— Government, as it was once well defined by a great English orator, “is the seminary of the soul.” We are all a set of children who must be managed, and it will seldom happen, that the pupil man, will not carry through life most of the properties of his great master, government. A captivating greatness of mind should be its endearing and prepossessing characteristic. It should aim at great ends by great means, protect the weak, relieve the oppressed, right the injured, but on no consideration countenance injustice. By the over-ruling plenitude of its power it should restrain the violent, and disarm its enemies, as well by rigour when opposed to them in the field, as by an abhorrence of vice and a marked love of virtue. Indeed the natural effect of fidelity, clemency, kindness and protection in governors, is peace and amity, order and esteem, on the part of the governed.

I must fairly, however, admit to the Unionists, all the heart-rending and melancholy truths adduced from the state of the country, and brought in illustration of their arguments, though I must for ever contend, that the remedy which they propose for our national evils, is neither founded in long-sighted wisdom, nor consistent with their specious and querulous pretensions to a strong-nerved humanity. I have no wish to make the
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claims of any body of men on the justice of the legislature, a stalking-horse to popularity. Whether I were disposed to admit or deny all the accusations brought, not against individuals indeed, but against *whole denominations and general descriptions of men* in this country, I can have no hesitation in thinking, that the man who sits down deliberately to tear away every plaister which has been placed upon this bleeding state, is equally deficient in wisdom and humanity. It is quite alike to the community, whether this conduct proceeds from malignity or zeal. It is a temper which ought not to be encouraged, because it is mischievous. It would be happy for the repose of mankind, if those who light up the flames of discord by their fury, were the only persons who were to extinguish them with their blood.

Above the vileness of writing for any faction, or adopting from interest any opinion, having little to hope, and less to apprehend, from any minister, I must say, that let the Catholics of Ireland be as adverse to our constitution, as our statutes are hostile and injurious to them, let the accusations which are made against them be just or unjust, founded or unfounded—Let their opinions and their inclinations be like or unlike those of other men, various, fluctuating, and contradicting, either they are or they are not subjects for further legislative indulgence. If no new occurrences

occurrences have pointed out the necessity of making the Catholics an efficient part of the physical and substantial support of this island, both Protestant and Catholic must hope that time will allay dissensions, which anger has inflamed, and both will really consult their common interest, by consulting the principles of common sense and common humanity, and both will alike look forward to some happy time, when all their dissensions, by some legislative provision would be buried in an eternal grave. A co-partnership in great national misfortunes would be at best to the Catholics a miserable exaltation: To distract the country, in looking for advantages when the question was, Constitution, or no Constitution at all, would not only be fatal to their own interests, but to those of the entire community. But if in the present clash and jumble of nations, it is dangerous and impolitic to keep any description of men in the bosom of a state, writhing under the impression of injuries, ought it not be the legislature of the country which should take those persons under its immediate protection and benevolence, and interest them by the dearest ties, in the preservation of this ill-fated community.—Supposing the Catholics incorrigible enemies, or supposing them friends to the Constitution, any other conduct in the legislature would be unworthy the name and character of Irishmen. *If they are incorrigible enemies*

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to the Constitution, any drunken invalid (said Mr. Burke, in some one of his speeches) is qualified to hoist the flag, and deliver up the keys of the fortress on his knees; but it is the part of a magnanimous general to defend his post of importance and of trust to the very last, even against the most powerful enemy. If like other men, they entertain different shades of political opinion, the affairs of religion should not disturb the sweet and endearing exercise of mutual friendships, and political interests ought not to poison and pervert the spirit of religion upon all sides. But supposing a case which from no slight observation for some years on the general conduct of the English Administration, I think not very unlikely to occur, that in either event, Union or no Union, the Catholic claim would not influence the question at all,—the inference is obvious.—If the admission of the Catholics of Ireland into the English Government is now conceived perfectly compatible with the safety of the English Constitution, though many ingenious distinctions have been taken, and though many hair-splitting metaphysicians have argued otherwise; yet I own I never yet have seen any fair logical inference, which founded on the danger of the state, fairly demonstrated the necessity of excluding them from a due participation of all the advantages in our mixed form of polity. So far, however, from conceiving that an Union can allay even the religious

gious dissensions of this country, it requires no superior discernment to foresee, that it will necessarily considerably inflame the existing animosities; and if it should so happen, that political antipathies should assume a more dreaded and determined character;—if all trade should be comparatively diminished, and all chance of an ameliorated condition be totally taken away, I cannot think that the person lays any great claim to a prophetic character, who ventures to predict some volcanic eruption, more furious than the worst of those which this distracted land has heretofore had the afflicting misfortune to encounter. I know full well, when I look into the bosom of my own family, when I take the range and survey of my dearest friends; or when I regard the honorable motives of many inestimable men who support this measure, that there is a widely differing opinion as to the effect which an Union will have in securing the country against the repetition of those scenes which we have lately witnessed. But trust me, my countrymen, that the real danger to established Government is less from its enemies than itself.—Look at the history of your own country,—look to the history of all nations and all times, and you will find that the issue of all revolutions is so uncertain, that the scenes that too often usher them in, are so turbulent and so bloody, the prejudices on the side of ancient establishments so great, and the interests involved in

in their support so powerful, that while they provide in any tolerable measure for the happiness of the people, they may bid defiance to all the efforts of their enemies. Looking, therefore, with the closest eye even at the worst part of our picture,—our religious and political dissensions, I can see nothing that should seduce an honest mind, nor deter a manly legislator from adhering to the great protecting and presiding which I have already laid down,—*close connexion with England, through the medium of a resident legislature invigorated and improved.*

We are now arrived at that point of the argument, when it is necessary to try this principle by the relation in which we stand to our external enemies. Here possibly it might be sufficient for the argument, to contrast the present situation of France, with her situation when this question was last agitated, and to infer that as the extent of her conquests, or her confidence in victory could not be so great now as they were then; therefore as we opposed the measure when she was flushed and animated with success, we ought not to be less disposed to waver in our resolution when she has sustained great comparative reverses;—when she appears likely to be torn to her very centre by internal commotions.

Conservative principle now tried by a review of the state of Europe.

In an argument of this kind, that happy occurrence, a general peace cannot be a subject for any speculation. We must suppose, therefore, a continuation

tinuation of the war, and when we suppose it, I entreat for one to be considered as not having the principles of humanity so blunted by all the heart-rending recitals of the devastation of our species, as not to pant with impatience for the happy termination of this vindictive contest. If the war is to be continued, our naval and military establishments are in an unequalled state of vigor and preparation. If great expences are required to support those establishments, the monopoly of whatever trade there is, gives us a great comparative advantage over our enemies. Though the war, and the monopoly it gives, do not permit those countries to derive any thing like the advantages from its continuation, which they must derive from a general peace. For one, my mind has never been accustomed to composing or chanting death songs over the fall of either of these great empires. They have both great means, great spirits, great courage, and great enthusiasm. If we look to the people of all classes and descriptions in England; if we turn our eyes at home, there appears no lack of zeal, no disposition to forego making great sacrifices, to maintain our islands chaste and inviolate from the ravages of an invading enemy. But supposing the strength or weakness of France can or cannot influence the question, if France is more powerful, Ireland and the empire never were more formidably prepared. If France is less powerful,

erful, the inference is obvious ; there is less necessity (even supposing an Union to strengthen the empire) for the measure. But for the purpose of argument, we will suppose as some fondly imagine, that Sieyes and Buonaparte are preparing the way for the introduction of a king : or as others who are disposed to put a most favourable construction on whatever happens in France suppose, that all factions are to terminate, all differences to subside, and that the country is now to obtain a strength, energy and power, to which, since the æra of the revolution, it had not before arrived. In the former case there would be less necessity for an Union ; in the latter case Union cannot possibly strengthen our connexion with England—it may weaken it. Of all things under heaven, my nature most recoils at the idea of any nation's reposing in an invading army ; or trucking and huxtering on subjects of domestic concern with an invading enemy. The principle of admitting a foreign power to interfere in what is properly of national concern, has never yet that I have known in history, worked well, but in a solitary instance ; and those who study the history of that time, will see at how many periods the advantages which were likely to be derived from it, were held by the most uncertain tenure. I think it an ungenerous and unmanly principle to entertain towards our country. All the advantages which have

ever been derived from it, have been narrow, feeble, uncertain, and precarious. But when I consider the subject I am discussing, I must take human nature as I find it, influenced as it is in every clime and every age, by the fashion, the folly, or the wickedness of the world.—As the apprehension that our enemies abroad co-operating with the discontented at home, is made a ground for the measure, it is incumbent on *me* to shew, that such an argument can have no influence in determining the question.—The safety of Ireland, Union or no Union, is essential to the existence of Great Britain, and as I ever have and ever must consider those countries when they consult their common interests partners in the same concern, sisters of the same house, and portions of the same Empire, demanding a reciprocal sacrifice of partial accommodations to the common good, so I must be excused for thinking, that any protection extended by England to Ireland (particularly when that protection is ultimately for the preservation of England herself,) does not entitle her to be requited by the surrender of every thing dear, sacred and valuable to man. I love the two countries too well to balance their mutual favors to each other. But let it be recollected by those who would support an Union, as a grateful recompence for the gallant men who have been sent over to defend this country, that Ireland has

marched

marched armies of men, and transported millions of money to support England in every war, and that she has looked for no requital for the sacrifices she has made—let it likewise be recollected, that the strongest disposition has been shewn to rise in exertion, in proportion to all the difficulties with which the Empire has been threatened, when England has the good sense to appreciate our friendship with tenderness and treat us with humanity.

Examining therefore the relation in which we stand toward our enemies, on manly and rational grounds, I see nothing for dejection. It is easy I admit to foresee extreme cases, to calculate on accidents, and to blazon out the pages of a newspaper or a pamphlet, with what may happen.—To point to Brest where so many ships of war are lying at their anchorage, and to add to this, that troops are daily embarking.—To state that what happened before might happen again, and that if fifteen hundred men were landed before, 15,000 may be landed again, *therefore we ought to have an Union*. All I say is, that it is idle to suppose that an enemy would be received with greater warmth after an Union than before it. Therefore whether there is danger or no danger, I would rather animate the country than depress it. I would rather interest every man in the Constitution, than surrender the Constitution itself. I would fly to that strong hold which every Government

vernment has, when it secures the affection of a nation by similar privileges, equal protection, common interest, and kindred blood. These are ties which though they "are said to be as light as air, are as strong as links of iron." The speculatists in all countries are a mite in the hands of the rest of the community. Depend on it, that legislature which proceeds on this principle will have itself surrounded with the real physical efficient force of the country, and, no power under Heaven will be able to tear it from its allegiance. Under all the circumstances of Europe, I see no reason for deserting the grand presiding principle which I have laid down—*close connexion with England, through the medium of a resistent Legislature invigorated and improved.*

Conservative principle tried, with a view to the advantage of the Empire.

But those whose minds have always heretofore been cramped and narrowed to a cabinet policy, now expand them to the consideration of empire, and contend that this measure is essentially necessary to give it stability and security in its further operations. It is melancholy as well as ridiculous to observe the splendid panegyric which they make upon the measure, without an attempt to convince the reason, or enlighten the judgment. I have already shewn that an Union gives no increased strength whatever to Ireland, I must now shew that it is calculated to weaken even the Empire itself. What are the immediate advantages which it can confer on England? None except those

those derived from encreased absentees. When has Parliament been deficient in its zeal to support any common cause in which the two countries have been engaged? Never. But Union, after the great expences which may be incurred, will enable the British Government to diminish the civil expenditure of this part of the incorporate kingdom; in other words, it will enable it to direct a considerable portion of that money at present spent in the civil government of Ireland to the advancement of the Empire. Wretched calculation! to substitute great national discontent for a paltry saving of this kind. It will enlarge the base of British taxation; if it does, it will weaken this part of the Empire—what makes this part of the Empire principally weak, its poverty. Wealth most frequently constitutes strength—self-interest operates most strongly on the human mind; those who are comfortable and affluent will not only bear with more froward humours in the state, but will make greater sacrifices and brave greater dangers, than the poorer orders of the community. If that part of the Empire is commonly least vulnerable, that is most affluent, neither the encrease of absentees, nor the extending the base of British taxation are calculated to render us more secure. Besides encreased discontent is only to be counteracted by encreased force. Instead of Ireland being a profitable accession to England, it may so happen, that

that the revenue which could be raised in the country, would be little more than sufficient for its internal defence. I believe in my conscience that the principal reason why the late unhappy rebellion was so immediately suppressed, was because the people of Ireland found that their condition was improving, even under the pressure of war, and the calamitous appearance which the country assumed. If they had begun to taste the sweets of industry in 1762, and then had been gradually going back from 1782 to 1798, I think there would have been reason to apprehend a more formidable resistance—increased poverty begets increased popular discontent—increased popular discontent requires to be over-awed by increased military strength—increased military strength can only be kept on foot by a considerable augmentation of the national revenue.—So that calculating as I do on the depression of this commercial country, and concluding that its discontent will be proportioned to its depression, I cannot help thinking exclusive of the increased danger arising out of the present appearance of the affairs of Europe, that even in a financial point of view, no great benefit can be derived from the measure to England; and certainly no advantage which can compensate for any further alienation of esteem and affection. In proportion as we diminish the means of the country, we not only prevent the further increase of revenue, but we diminish these funds

funds which are essential to discharging the interest of our present debt. The deficiency in the revenue, which will be occasioned by the decline of our foreign trade, may possibly be made up by a sweeping land-tax. What England loses one way, she will replace in another. When she draws away the capital of Ireland, she roots up all the seeds of our future greatness, and encreases our weakness. So that if she gains one way, (by the emigration of great landed proprietors, and by extending the base of her taxation) she loses in another by excluding the possibility of our making such advances as will enable us to bear greater burthens. She increases the necessity of keeping up a greater military establishment. Local wealth arises out of local causes. Ireland, therefore, may certainly be ruined, though England herself in the great view of the question cannot be materially served. As to the argument which is strongly urged in favour of this measure, namely, the preventing this country being in time to come, (what it is assumed, that it always has been,) an arena for factions, for maddened demagogues, and profligate politicians; I really think such an argument, when made a part of an imperial question, ludicrous indeed. All that can be said in answer to such an accusation is, that no country under heaven is free from contending parties, when public discontents vent themselves in the clamour of these parties, they

they subside into a calm, it is only the confinement in the bosom which gives them a fierce and deadly tincture. But to make the patronage over this country, among other things, a further inducement for British factions to endeavour to raise themselves to power, by their harangues and artifice, is only to increase an evil which already exists in that country, without suppressing or removing any of the baleful effects which such an evil is calculated to extend to Ireland. It is to be remembered, that the legislature of Ireland is now dressed in the most *filthy dowlaps*, for the very purpose of disgusting the public at its continuation, and reconciling it to its eternal removal. Yet I do trust, that to every man who hopes within the parental arms of this country to find a repose for the evening of life, her freedom will still be dear. I do not despair but that the calm steady voice of reason will yet lull to silence the vain clamours of faction, hush the rancourous hissings of envy, and unbar the avenues to returning justice. It is therefore, that even in the great view of advantage to the empire, I see no earthly reason which can induce a comprehensive mind to abandon the great presiding principle, to which I have been so often compelled to allude, *close connexion with England, through the medium of a resident legislature invigorated and improved.*

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If I have been right in those commercial arguments which I have urged, if I have been correct in the view of the constitution which I have taken, and if I have been fortunate in so arduous a subject as that of examining our affairs at home, and viewing our relative situation with foreign powers, to have looked at them with manly firmness and independent intrepidity, God of heaven and of truth, what a compound of folly and of levity, are those arguments which are buzzed about in support of an Union! How admirably have the two houses of parliament in England improved on every topic which was urged within or without the walls of our own! Indeed from the perusal of all the speeches delivered in these assemblies, far from imagining that the English members had waited to be instructed, by the introduction of Irishmen into the British parliament, in an art hitherto supposed to belong exclusively to the Irish themselves, one would have supposed that it was only necessary that a connexion should be formed in embryo, that those gentlemen might be instantaneously instructed in this art, and enabled to display to the world how qualified they were to improve it to the greatest possible perfection.—It would in truth appear, as if these great statesmen had sent over their speeches to Ireland, to prove to the wavering Unionists, the very peculiar ability with which they must necessarily rule an empire, when they could so soon surpass the Irish themselves in that extraordinary accomplish-

Absurdities of
Unionists
ridiculed.

ment, of which they were heretofore reputed the most churlish monopolists. Irishmen, says the worthy *Chancellor of the Exchequer of England*, the preservation of the inestimable blessings of regular government and established institution, are in the actual situation of your country, precarious and insecure; but an Union will perpetuate them, *by taking them away for ever*. Irishmen, says his worthy colleague, Mr. Dundas, you are very poor, very wretched, indeed; but an Union will make you rich like the Scotch, *by squeezing every guinea out of your Country*. Irishmen, says the *sapient metaphysician*, Mr. Wyndham, your manners are not softened, your minds are unreclaimed, but an Union will remedy these evils, *by tearing away your Corinthian pillar of cultivated life, your aristocracy, and by cutting you off from all intercourse with polished society*. Aye, says Mr. Canning, your constitution has been assailed, and was in danger of perishing, but an Union will prevent its ever being again attacked, *by destroying it for ever*. And then says his worthy helpmate, Lord Hawkebury, we shall be able to march to Paris, our common strength will be invigorated, an Union will remove all complaints, *by making the cause for complaint juster than ever*. This is a very faint specimen of the rapid improvement made by the members of the British House of Commons. The advancement of the lords corresponds with their more elevated degree. Irishmen, says Lord Auckland, I was your secretary,

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I have been a kind of tutelary deity to your country ; and though it is true that I succeeded very badly in uniting the Dutch against the common enemy, yet my capacity certainly extends to the Union of Empires. I have written various essays on your trade ; and as I have clearly shewn, that you had no trade before 1782, and it has been rapidly increasing since the æra of your independence, without at all injuring the trade of England, an Union will encrease that trade many fold, *by reducing you to nearly the same situation as when you had no trade whatever.* And then says the modern Solon, the lawgiver to the Corsicans, with a kind of rapturous exultation, see how sweetly these beauteous countries embrace each other, and seem formed for one empire, *though we need only look from our windows to observe their caresses interrupted by the most boisterous seas.* Though (says he) you have neither fleets nor armies, can make no treaties, no captures by sea or land, though you have no dominion over *Ceylon, the Cape of Good Hope, Martinique, or Minorca,* and though you are obviously a little subjugated dependency, yet an Union will give you more, and do more for you than my biennial parliaments or universal suffrage could do for Corsica ; it will give you what you have not, and it will preserve what you have *by taking away even to the right of framing your own laws.* And then says the luminous Lord Grenville, (who by the by sent over his

his illustrious relative purposely to refresh and improve the little stock of Irish knowledge which he had acquired during his viceroyship, that he might communicate his increased acquirements to his lordship)—then says the noble lord, summing up the debate—I see it my lords, I see it all—the constitution of Ireland is in the greatest danger. And *he illustrates its weakness, by admitting, that it crushed a greater rebellion than that by which the Constitution of England was ever yet assailed.* The Noble Lord then proceeds to lament that some of the best blood and the greatest talents in the country have caught the phrenzy of separation—but contends that an Union will encrease in Ireland the number of the friends to British connexion. *by taking the men of the greatest consequence, and the best supporters of the British connexion out of the country.* We know, says the Noble Lord, that the Irish are very proud of their Independence, but an Union will madden them with joy *by increasing their humiliation,* and will remove every kind of hostility to England, *by making her in reality an enemy instead of a friend.*

Indeed this extraordinary and unprecedented quickness of acquirement on the part of the English members, proves to my humble capacity, how very unnecessary it is, that the *good, honest, plain, country gentleman of Ireland,* should be put

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to the trouble or the danger of being broken down on the rough roads of Wales, or obliged to deplore *when they arrived* in London, that they were drowned in the packet, or were *kilt* or *lost* in the snow on *Penmanmoore*. This happy instance of British sagacity, and this admirable display of the comprehensive mind of the English statesman—which adds to its own stock of information and erudition in the course of one little week, what we *poor Irishmen* have been endeavouring to excel in, for these last 700 years, will certainly prevent the Union treaty being incumbered with any discussion on the numbers which are to be elected to the Imperial Parliament, or the manner in which they are to be returned. In the name of wonders, what can be expected even from the sagacity and foresight of our most *accomplished professor* in this happy acquirement after the astonishing exhibition they have made. What purpose can it be to deprive us of the festive pleasure, and the convivial fellowship of those, who though they hold places themselves under the crown, “declare to God, Mr. Speaker, that they are wearied and sick to death of the abuses in the Irish Government, and stunned with the foolish prattle of the Independence of our Constitution; and who therefore hail an Union with joy, because it will reform all abuses in the Constitution, and make it really independent

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by burying it in an eternal grave! O rem ridiculam, Cato; et jocofam!

These specious and plausible absurdities vanish before the stroke of reason and of truth. It would be well however if this extraordinary propensity extended no farther. It is a continuation of the same temper which converts a majority *against* an Union address to the crown, into a most triumphant majority *in favor of* an Union itself. It is thus that not only all the rules of common sense, but all the old habits of ministerial prudence, and ministerial decency are abandoned *in this laudable exhibition of disinterested friendship for the happiness of Ireland*. In Mr. Pitt's memorable Propositions, when he found he had but a trifling majority, he abandoned them altogether. Eighty majority in the English Parliament was too small for this minister to go to war with Russia:—how many bills have I seen abandoned as the opposition to them encreased, how many various and contradictory amendments to motions for peace have I heard made during the present war, by the minister himself to meet the sentiment of the English nation. I state these things as much to shew the happy influence which public opinion has on a *resident Legislature*, as to shew the old habits of ministerial decency to the people of England. But when an Union is proposed to the Irish Parliament, it is rejected? It is proposed to the Irish Nation, it is rejected?

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The minister is obstinate ; the nation unchanged in opinion. I do declare solemnly to God, under all the circumstances of Europe, I see nothing which can save the Empire, but the calm, generous and magnanimous Independence of the Irish House of Commons ; feeling that our Constitution contains within itself the means of correcting both its principles and its practice ; that we have inherited it from our fathers and ought to transmit it to our posterity !

Gentlemen,

I have troubled you too long. It is high time to put an end to this desultory address, already I fear protracted to too great an extent. Which of your prejudices have I insulted ? What passions have I inflamed ? Have I in those times of national peril weakened your country, or traduced your Constitution by shewing the advantage of political justice. *Sine summa justitia reipublicam regi non posse*, was a sentiment which I early learned from an accomplished Roman orator, not deficient in a knowledge of human nature, nor unacquainted with the management of states. Have I set down with base factious views and a sinister ambition, and masked under dark, dastard generalities, principles which I dare not openly avow ? Have I breathed out my whole soul to you on this great question, or have I carped at, and cavilled with a measure, because
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it has emanated from those who happen to be in power? Have I wearied you with arguments on the misery and the mischief which must result from this proceeding, without shewing you a safe and honourable cause which ought to be pursued? Have I taken up the question with intemperance, and discussed it with malignity? Or have I shewn you that I am so ignorant of human nature, as not to be satisfied with deriving from the mingled frailties, and excellencies of men, those effects which hitherto have not been produced by the influence of firm and steady virtue? No, Gentlemen, I abhor violence and impatience of contradiction—it only injures a good cause; it cannot serve a bad one—it originates in a radical defect of judgment, and too often terminates in an incorrigible intolerance of temper. I have re-considered the question in the manner which I at least have accustomed myself to think that every topic ought to be discussed, giving my adversaries full credit for the purity of their intention, and struggling with all the difficulties of my situation, and in doing so, I have not rushed upon the theatre of my country, yet covered with the blood of unnumbered multitudes, inflaming you to fresh disturbances; no no, I have looked through the yawning chasms of your ruin; as the honest mariner who after he has dropped a tear of unfeigned sorrow over the numbers of his crew whom he has lost, in the scowl-

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ing tempest, examines his vessel finds that it has not been irretrievably wounded, trims his sails, and steers forward to some haven of security. Our little country, from what motives or what causes I care not to examine, has lately occupied in the fore-ground of the melancholy picture which Europe has presented, a place to which she was not entitled by her importance nor her strength. The melancholy consequence of such a proceeding has been, that she has been represented bleeding at every pore, covered with mangled carcases, with villages flaming in every quarter, and writhing under all the ravages of devastating war. It is time that we should begin to see all the horrors and calamities which arise out of doubtful and dangerous courses. Harmony is creative—discord destructive. We have all injuries to balance—we have all passions to restrain—we have all froward humours to correct—we have particularities which require to be indulged.—After all the irksome and vexatious wanderings of our nature, I would present to you the auspicious Angel of the Constitution using its healing and meditorial spirit, inspiring both governors and governed, by a sense of common interest—common safety—and the feeling of common humanity, with an encreased love of their afflicted country.

Indeed, my address to you is more in sorrow than in anger, and therefore possibly a

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greater subject for your regard. There are many topics on which I would have willingly trespassed on your patience. In the few pages I have troubled you with, I have endeavoured to blend the two characters of moralist and politician; and in humble confidence I challenge the most rigid examination of the assertions which I have made, and the arguments which I have advanced. I see in this measure of Union not one benefit to be obtained, not one interest to be advanced, not one prejudice to be corrected, not one passion to be allayed, not one principle of conservation and protection. If I did, I tell you honestly, I would have given it through every stage a warm and disinterested support, however unpopular that conduct might have been. I am not ignorant how much the British administration hope to succeed in this project. I know full well that the measure is so popular in England, that not one diurnal print, however disposed the editors and the proprietors of them may be to sympathise in our misfortunes, and to recognize the destruction of British liberty in the measure, will venture to hazard more than some little squeamish, coqueting, exhilarating paragraph to their English readers, "that all the terms are agreed on, and that there is no doubt but that an Union will be carried into execution." I think, however, that from a long observation on the politicks of the men who compose the present administration,

ministration, that there never was a cabinet regulated in its opinions so much by "existing circumstances," as the cabinet of the day. I do not mention this by way of reproach, rather the reverse. When it is found that no exertions can make this measure popular in Ireland, depend upon it that it will be abandoned. No minister ever knew his men in the House of Commons of England better than Mr. Pitt; and whatever character the ordinary resolutions of that house for years past to Ireland might have been, I do in my conscience believe, that a great majority of that house have deplored sincerely the unhappy state of Ireland for these some years past. I know that many were cheered considerably in 1795 and 1796, when it was necessary to buzz about, that something would be done to quiet Ireland; and though it was conjectured then that an Union was in contemplation, and though the question has been decided in England, yet sure I am, that any measure repugnant to the feelings of the Irish nation would not be well received. Depend upon it that they will *prefer a real Union of interest and affection to any nominal interest whatever.* It is impossible that any measure could be more obnoxious to this community. I found my opinion, not on the expression of general sentiment, not on the muttering dissatisfaction in the very persons who support it, not in the depression of public credit, not in the suspension of commercial enterprise, not in the destruction of private friendship, not in the unparalleled

unparalleled sacrifices which have been made by several, not in the dismissal of the best servants of the crown, not in village intrigue, not in the extraordinary favours conferred on the persons who have enlisted in the ranks of the Irish secretary, not even on the conditional clauses introduced into the new leases which are now made.—I found that opinion upon the very addresses themselves, which have been presented in support of the measure. I do not say that they are not signed by honourable men—I do not say that any signatures have been extorted by fear—I do not say that any have been operated on by corrupt and secret influence—I know that the signatures from my own county are highly respectable indeed; but I'll make no reflections on the manner in which they were obtained. I say, that after the scenes which have desolated Ireland, under the prevailing spirit of persecution, and the consequent reciprocal hatred of religious parties, that if Union could be considered to have any one thing in it likely to raise the languid and drooping head of public credit, to re-animate industry, and to put down all faction, that instead of a few solitary advertisements haunting us day after day, for months together in the ministerial papers in favour of the measure, the table of the House of Commons would not be large enough to contain all the petitions which would be sent up from every part of Ireland, praying that so happy a measure might instantaneously be adopted? I have

have seen too frequently indeed in both countries, for the purpose of the common good, ministers and those who *would* be ministers play the game of faction, and fight for an address for a particular purpose, with as much zeal as they would fight for that which was the object of the contest—power itself. But the plain unsophisticated sense of the nation always bore down this kind of specious artifice. Whether it was followed, or whether it was rejected, is not a matter for our enquiry.—But the busy and intemperate partizan was always lost, in the expression of the unsmothered sentiments of the country. If there is any one thing under Heaven which should endear you, (who see the ruin of your fortunes in the adoption of this measure) to the Legislature, it is the dignified hope—the manly silence which you have preserved. You gave an opinion before,—you feel it unnecessary to repeat it again. When did you give that opinion? Before you saw your country disturbed? Certainly not. You gave it unnecessary when your minds were so tremblingly alive to the horrors you had witnessed, that the smallest allusion to them was sufficient to draw tears even from the most obdurate. When your scaffolds were yet reeking with the blood of innumerable offenders; when your fields were yet covered with the unburied bodies of slaughtered multitudes, of all ages, of all classes and descriptions of political opinion, loyal and disloyal, incorrigible

gible jacobins and temperate reformers; king's men and French partizans, enveloped in the dreadful indiscriminating whirlwind of insurrection, You gave it; under all the agony and distraction inseparable from the remembrance of the loss of your dearest associates, and the plunder of your most valued relatives. You gave it as I may say, when your metropolis was almost illumined, with the flames of surrounding villages, lighted up by fanaticism and those vehement passions which are always sure to arise in the bosom *even* of the best men by the reverberation of outrages. Absent as I have been from among you for many years, you must pardon me if I have not a head to comprehend the utility of the little movements of party which I daily see, and if I have not a heart capable of being influenced in any respect by such considerations. But as in the pelting of the tempest or the bursting of the hurricane the way-worn traveller, is filled with a pious rapture, when the gleam of sunshine plays upon his eye and makes the horizon glad, so in a season of too general delinquency the generous heart which can emit a single throb in the cause of humanity, will be inspired with love and admiration for those not totally callous to the claims of humanity. In this eventful year, every thing has not been as all we might wish it. I have not forgotten the season when the present Viceroy arrived, nor have I been a totally indifferent ob-

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server of the conduct he has pursued ; and I must say, that if I could view his conduct uninfluenced by, and abstracted from the present question ; if I could contemplate him by prudence and by wisdom, perpetuating the calm which his manly but amiable moderation had diffused over this har-
 raffed and disturbed land, I would have looked on him in no other light than an agent sent, if I might use the figure, by heaven itself, to receive the effusions of a nation's gratitude, and lay them at the judgment seat of the Almighty.

Gentlemen,

In the same temper that I eye the character of individuals, I can look upon the Constitution of your fathers, and your afflicted country—and acting upon a steady education and a settled principle, I cannot join in its reformation by its *subversion* ; nor can I turn away from it with disgust, because it lies wounded in every part, and scarce known by the most quick-sighted of men. As to your country, it was your Constitution made it in a few years as powerful and happy as it was, and if that Constitution is annihilated your country will be a *joint tenant* with it in a *common grave*. The hurricane of human passion has swept over us—if we *look up* to that Constitution with firmness and integrity, trust me, that we may *look down*
 on

on the follies and the crimes which desolate Europe with safety though not with complacency. Do not undervalue the resources of your country. Though civil war in a commercial country is almost an act of suicide ; yet remember that there is a great excess of productive labour above your wants. If the *rebellion* has disturbed the collection of revenue, and has made it necessary to take a great part of your circulating capital, to replace the *fixed capital* which was so unhappily destroyed, remember that in twenty years, you have nearly completed the foundation of an opulent nation. In the increase of buildings and machinery—in the improvement of the soil—in the fencing your little farms—in the opening new roads and canals and in extended trade and augmented capital.

My opinions are now before you on a subject which has deeply agitated my mind, and excited my feelings, and I hope I have shewn myself incapable of submitting my understanding to be cramped or narrowed by *factionous views of any kind* or by *local interests*, if any there were to be advanced by this measure. When I took my pen to address you, every mean and bad propensity took immediate alarm. Rely on it said AVARICE you will be a looser by this conduct. You know not what injury it may do you said CAUTION ; or what scrapes it may draw you into whispered COWARDICE. Depend upon it said DISCRETION
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it will be said you were actuated by the most sinister motives.

You can never after, cried *HYPOCRISY*, aloud be received with kindness by those with whom you have so widely differed ; nor be any thing, said *PRIDE*, but a very contemptible fellow ; nor rise, quoth *MEANNESS*, in your profession. But, like *YORICK*, when he offered half his chaise to the distressed lady ; I have not listened to these cabals which were to no purpose but to encompass the heart with adamant. You are now in the full possession of my genuine sentiments on the state of your country, I have been reared in the school of political candour and moderation, and I hope I have made no unworthy use of the instructions which I there received. Indeed every event of the world, and every occurrence of the day have confirmed me more and more in an approbation of the principles of temper and moderation of every kind.

God of peace and love, look down upon this distracted land, and bid hatred, folly, madness, and murder cease.

THE END.

It will be said, you are assisted by the most
valuable men in the country.

As to your assistance, I wish to be understood
as being connected with persons of whom you
are not likely to be dissatisfied, nor do any thing, said
for I cannot but very much regret the loss of
any of your friends, and I am sure that the
loss of any of them would be a great loss to the
cause.



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